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plunging into it under present conditions would be downright fools. Arbitration, an international court, he thus came to demand as the only rational course open, and he believed that as soon as men should see the force of his technical and economic reasoning, they would all turn naturally to this sensible method of adjusting disputes, that war would, as a matter of course, disappear, and with its disappearance would come disarmament.

It was this view presented in his work that so deeply impressed the Czar in 1897, as it has impressed many of the leading minds of Europe. The Conference at The Hague would, doubtless, have been called anyway, as Nicholas II. had already been studying the subject from the time of his father's death from many points of view. Mr. Bloch's massive logic quickened his pace and decided him to immediate action.

It is hardly correct to call Mr. Bloch's view his own, or to say that it was original with him. It is a view which has been forcing itself for years upon thoughtful minds in all civilized countries, and which before long will compel the assent of everybody. Mr. Bloch's great merit lay in the large and masterful way in which he interpreted to our time its own growing consciousness of the absurd and ruinous situation into which it has been brought by its enslavement to the old barbarous institution of war.

Nations as Gentlemen.

The Von Holleben-Pauncefote incident at the President's reception on New Year's day suggests anew the inquiry whether nations, through their chief officials and diplomatic representatives, may ever be expected to conduct themselves in matters of international etiquette as considerate and well-bred gentlemen do in private life. It has generally been held that they cannot be expected to do so, that it is impossible for nations in their mutual relations to follow any other law than that of egotism, pure and simple, with all that this implies of self-preference, truculence and stickling for place.

Certain it is that the law of egotism has been the rule in the past. What has been called "precedence" is only a peculiar artificial form of selfishness, so fixed up that everybody in gold lace and stars except the last fellow in the line is ahead of somebody else. And the last man has been happy to be last only because he has seen in imagination at some time in the future a line of less important envoys following meekly behind him. This whole matter of diplomatic precedence will some day be looked upon as quite as ridiculous a thing as knight-errantry now is when seen through the pages of Cervantes.

It is difficult even now to keep a straight face when one thinks of the tyrannical hold which it has maintained in the past. When William Penn, a

little over two hundred years ago, drew up his scheme for the peace of Europe, he had, in order to be "practical," to get over in some way the difficulty offered by this law of precedence. He provided that his diet or parliament should meet about a round table in a round house, with doors all about, that there might be no top or bottom of the room, no head or foot of the table, and all this that nobody might "precede" anybody else. But he innocently forgot that this part of the scheme was more unpractical, more ahead of the time, than any other part of it. The big diplomats, if the plan had been tried, would never have consented to allow the little ones thus to be made equal to themselves by the simple device of a round table in a round room.

Why should not the whole custom of "precedence" be thrown overboard to-day at Washington? Why should it be necessary for the oldest in service — or is it the oldest in years? — of the diplomatic corps to shake hands first with the President, in order to prevent the whole array of them from shaking their fists at each other? One of the doctrines of modern international politics is that sovereign, independent nations are equal in diplomatic rights and privileges. If the heads of legation — forty in number, more or less — are equal, why should they not all be satisfied to enter the room and shake hands with the President in any order that might chance to come about, as the same number of equal gentlemen would do in private life? Why should it not be honorable for an ambassador, and creditable to his country, for him to step back and say, "After you, sir," as a Christian gentleman would do?

Ambassador von Holleben's courtesy to Ambassador Pauncefote has raised him in the estimation of all cultivated Americans. It has at the same time increased the honor of his country much more, be it said by the way, than Chancellor von Bülow's quarreling with Mr. Chamberlain over the wires of the Associated Press. Lord Pauncefote, if he had been present at the reception, would, "according to the law," have shaken hands first with the President. But he was suffering at home with the gout, not a very comforting thing even under ordinary circumstances. The German ambassador, therefore, "according to the law," had the right to the first grasp of the President's hand. He decided to waive this right, and to treat the British ambassador as if he were present, by arranging for Lady Pauncefote to precede him in greeting Mr. Roosevelt.

It was a most thoughtful and gentleman-like thing for the German ambassador to do. We hope that his Excellency, Lord Pauncefote, one of the most unselfish diplomats in the whole field, may take the first suitable opportunity to return the courtesy. Let him, when he and the German ambassador are approaching the President at the head of the shining line of plenipotentiaries, step aside and say to Baron

von Holleben, "After you, Excellency." This would probably be the beginning of the breaking up of the whole absurd custom of diplomatic precedence inherited from the days when many nations were under suzerainty, and not equal as sovereign and independent states.

Editorial Notes.

Returning the Silver.

On January 17 President Roosevelt took the first step in restoring to China the property belonging to her which was seized by the United States troops. He instructed Secretary Long to hand over to the State Department, for transmission to Wu Ting Fang, the Chinese ambassador, the sum of \$376,000, which represents the value of the silver bullion seized at Tientsin by the United States marines. This bullion, which was found by the marines immediately after the capture of the city, was appraised by a board of officers and sold, and the proceeds were transmitted to Washington and deposited in the Treasury by Secretary Long. The Chinese ambassador at Washington, who had recently made representations to our government for the return of the value of the silver, is highly gratified that the government has decided to restore it. Every American citizen also ought to be gratified at this act of simple justice. Whatever may have been the original intentions of the persons who seized the silver bullion, to have kept this money in the National Treasury would have been on the part of the government nothing less than open intentional robbery. The restoration of property seized during a military campaign is something entirely different from what was accustomed to take place only a few decades ago. It is a striking evidence of the development of the public conscience. A little further evolution in the same direction will make such seizures of property impossible on either land or sea; and a still further evolution in the direction of right will stop the campaigns themselves.

Holland's Move for Peace.

The Netherlands Minister of Foreign Affairs has addressed to the British government a note proffering good offices toward ending the South African war. This is reported to have been done at the personal instigation of Queen Wilhelmina, who, with her people, is deeply distressed at the prolongation of the war. It appears that this move of the Dutch government represents Holland alone, though it is said to have the sympathy of other European governments. It has not the official endorsement of the two republics nor of their representatives in Europe. The Dutch note asks for the privilege of sending a commission to South Africa to confer with the Boer leaders and apprise them of the real state of affairs in regard to

intervention, etc. The British government, so far as we can gather from the dispatches, is unwilling to accept the Netherlands proposal as a basis of negotiation because it does not officially represent either the Boer leaders in South Africa nor their representatives in Europe. It is reported to be willing, however, for the Netherlands government to send the proposed commission to South Africa under certain stipulations. It does not seem likely at the moment that anything tangible in the way of peace negotiations will come of this effort. Neither the British government nor the Boers seems ready to yield anything, and so long as they remain thus disposed the war must go on with all its ravages and barbarities. We are glad, however, that the Netherlands offer has been made. It may lead to something else more promising.

Should Order an Investigation. Senator Hoar's resolution for an inquiry by a special commission into the condition of affairs in the Philippines ought to have met with the full and cordial approval of every citizen in the nation. A condition of affairs has existed out there, and continues to exist, as accumulating evidence discloses, which is a lasting disgrace to any country calling itself civilized. Our country professes to carry on war in what is called a "civilized" way. It is not doing it in the Philippines, as everybody now knows. The reconcentrado method of conquest, over which this country wrote its angry condemnation in blood in the case of Cuba, has been introduced, and is being extended, wherever the Filipino insurgents continue any decided opposition to having their country fall under the dominion of a foreigner who has so far shown them little cause to do anything but bitterly hate him. As we are writing this, the cable says that this system is at once to be put in force by General Bell in Batangas province, just south of Manila, that a certain zone is to be established around the garrisons into which the friendly inhabitants will be forced to come, under penalty of confiscation and destruction of their property. The insurgents, if they continue to try to maintain their cause by the only methods of which under the circumstances they are capable, are to be treated as outlaws and outside of the pale of "civilized warfare!" Senator Hoar ought to press his resolution with all possible speed. Nor ought it to have been turned over to Senator Lodge's Philippine committee, where it will most probably be smothered to death. There is no evidence, so far as we know, that this committee has done anything whatever to keep this country informed of the true state of things in the island or to check the shameful proceedings — "water cure," reconcentration, burning of villages — that have gone on there. To such cruel and shameful extremes is a country driven in its attempts to subdue a people whose